

# Literary Criticism

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# Classical and Romantic Criticism

- Classicism and Romanticism are artistic movements that have influenced the literature, visual art, music, and architecture of the Western world over many centuries. Classicism and Romanticism are artistic movements that have influenced the literature, visual art, music, and architecture of the Western world over many centuries.
- Classicism values traditional forms and structures.
- As an artistic movement Romanticism celebrates all strong emotions, not just feelings of love. In addition to emotion, Romantic artists valued the search for beauty and meaning in all aspects of life. **They saw imagination, rather than reason, as the route to truth.**

- The Romantics believed in the endless possibilities which man could change the world, and they embraced them.
- The Classicists, instead, held up the importance of adhering to what has already been said and done and mastering only those ideals

## CLASSICIST

- Reason, logic and analysis
- Seeks the universally true, good and beautiful
- Order (opp. to chaos) + formal rules of composition
- Looks to the past for models
- Simple structures
- Style- pastoral, tragedy, epic

## ROMANTICIST

- Emotion, intuition, imagination
- Seeks the exceptional, unconventional, original
- Full expression of emotions + free, spontaneous action
- Looks to the past for inspiration
- Simple language
- Style- sonnet, ode, folk

# Plato

- Wishes to banish all poets from his Republic- Book 10- metaphysical and ethical reasons
- Theory of Mimesis- Doctrine of Ideas or forms
- Narrative over imitative(dramatic)
- Spiritual growth- he supports art –Book 5.
- He is a seer, an inspired being who can see beyond the nature of things. (Quotes of Sir Philip Sidney, Shelley)

# Theory of Mimesis- of Plato

- In his theory of mimesis, Plato says that all art is mimetic by nature; art is an imitation of life.
- He believed that 'idea' is ultimate reality. Art imitates idea and so it is imitation of reality.
- If the ultimate reality consists of the "ideas" of things, of which individual objects are but reflections or imitations, then the painter or poet who imitates those individual objects is imitating an imitation, and so producing something which is still further removed from ultimate reality.

- For example, a chair exists firstly as idea, secondly the object of craftsmanship, and thirdly as object of representation in art. Thus **mimesis is thrice removed from reality** in Platonic conception of the world.

# Aristotle

- Peripatetic philosopher, first of the systematic theorists, an early exponent of the historical and psychological methods, and incidentally a pioneer in the business of sane literary judgement;
- so that alike in the theory and practice of criticism his works stand at the beginning of things, developing extending the findings of Plato. In the history of criticism the importance of his works are unquestionable and fundamental.

- Mimesis:
- Katharsis:
- Hamartia:
- Spoudaios:
- Six constituent elements of tragedy
- 3 unities

## PLATO

- Social reformer
- Idealist
- Art for moral purpose
- Emphasis on ultimate reality
- Mimesis as imitation

## ARISTOTLE

- Scientist
- Realist
- Art for aesthetic purpose
- Emphasis on empirical reality
- Mimesis as re-creation/  
representation

# Horace, Longinus & Dryden

## **HORACE (*Ars Poetica- Poesis, Poema, Poeta*)**

- Roman lyric poet during Augustus Caesar's reign
- Advocate of modernism & practical wisdom
- **Ars Poetica** (Art of Poetry; Letter to Piso)
  - **Poesis**- the subject matter of poetry
  - **Poema**- form of poetry
  - **Poeta**- the poet
- **“Purple Patch”**- a brilliant or ornate passage in a literary composition, usually in the midst of mediocrity

## LONGINUS (*On the Sublime, 5 Sources of Sublimity*)

- **5 sources of Sublimity:**

- **Innate Sources**

- **Grandeur of Thought:** this results from the faculty of conceiving great thoughts. Sublimity is the echo of a great soul.

- **Passion:** vehement and inspired passion- pathos

- **Rhetorical Features**

- **Schemata:** the proper use of figures of speech and thought. It is concealed by splendour of style

- **Phrasis:** noble language and diction. Language and diction must be appropriate to the grandeur of thought

- **Composition:** it is about the harmony in composition that gives definite shape to art

## **PHILIP SIDNEY (*Apologie for Poetrie/ The Defence of Poesie*)**

- Renaissance Criticism
- It is written in response to **Stephen Gosson's "School of Abuse"**- Puritan- challenged nature, value and function of poetry.

## JOHN DRYDEN (*Essay on Dramatic Poesie*)

- Neoclassical Criticism
- **Occasion: Sorbiere**, a Frenchman, visited England & wrote unfavourably on English science & stage
- **4 characters** (symbolic figures representing popular ideas of the day)
  - **Crites** (Richard Howard)- stands for Ancients, expounds the extreme classical view
  - **Eugenius** (Charles Sackville)- takes up the case for the moderns, moderns have the advantage of experience as well as the rules made by the ancients
  - **Lisideius** (Charles Sedley)- advocates the superiority of French plays, upheld 3 unities
  - **Neander** (Dryden)- advocates superiority of English over French and the Ancients, English plays display a richness of humour

# Wordsworth

- French Revolution
- Poetic Diction
- Subject Matter
- Poet

# Poetic Diction

- Poetic diction refers to the **style of writing used in poetry** (the linguistic style, vocabulary, and use of figurative language--normally metaphors). Up until Wordsworth's writing of the 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, the adherence to the poetic diction had yet to be seriously challenged.
- Wordsworth's issue, essentially, **with the use and adherence to poetic diction was the fact that it tended to alienate the common man**. Given that the common man did not speak using elevated vocabulary and figurative language, Wordsworth believed, given he wanted poetry to speak to all, that complete adherence to poetic diction needed to be dropped.

- he tried to write his poetry in the language really used by common men.
- He avoided various hackneyed devices of poetical diction used by contemporary poets.
- He has selected natural themes, and he has used a natural language. He has looked steadily at his subject, and so rendering of it is true to nature.
- He believes that the best of poems can be written in the normal language of a common man. He says, "Except for the difference of metre, the language of poetry would in no respect differ from that of good prose".

# The Poetic process-of Wordsworth

- 4 stages through which a poetic composition takes place:
  - Observation
  - Recollection
  - Contemplation
  - Imaginative excitement of the emotions which were experienced earlier.

# Criticisms against Wordsworth

- Coleridge- many apparently illogical, self-contradictory and irrational statements in the Preface.
- He also asserts that Wordsworth himself has violated in practice the principles of poetic composition that he advocates.
- T. S. Eliot- “it is neither emotion nor recollection nor tranquility” [ Tradition and Individual Talent].

# Coleridge

- Organic unity
- Fancy and Imagination
- Primary and Secondary Imagination
- Willing Suspension of Disbelief

- **Primary Imagination** is merely the power of receiving impressions of the external world through senses.
- It is an involuntary act of mind: the human mind receives impressions and sensations from the outside world, unconsciously and involuntarily.
- Living power and prime agent of all human perception
- **Universal** and possessed by all

- **Secondary imagination** is peculiar and distinctive attribute of the artist.
- It is making the artistic creation possible
- More active and conscious in its working
- Works upon what is perceived by the primary imagination, its raw material is the senses and impressions supplied to it by the primary imagination.
- By an effort of the will and the intellect, the secondary imagination selects and orders the raw material, and re-shapes and re-models it into objects of beauty.
- It is 'esemplastic', i.e. "a shaping and modifying power", which by its 'plastic stress' re-shapes objects of the external world and steepens them with a glory and dream that never was sea and land
- It is an active agent which dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to create

- Fancy is not a creative power at all.
- It deals with fixities and definitives and only combines what it perceives into beautiful shapes, like imagination it does not fuse and unify.
- The difference between the two is same as the difference between a mechanical mixture and a chemical compound. In a mechanical mixture a number of ingredients are brought together, and mixed up, but they do not lose their individual properties. They still exist as separate identities. In a chemical compd, the different ingredients combine to form something new.
- Fancy is the drapery of poetic genius, but imagination is its very soul.

# Matthew Arnold

- Touchstone method
- Poet as a moral critic
- Literature is the criticism of life
- Disinterestedness in poetry

- Arnold took selected passages from the modern authors and compared them with selected passages from the ancient authors and thus decided their merits. This method was called Arnold's Touchstone Method

# T.S. Eliot

- “A classicist in literature, a royalist in politics and an Anglo catholic in religion”- from his Preface to ‘For Lancelot Andrews
- Famous works( criticism)
  - Sacred Word: Essays in Poetry and Criticism
  - Tradition and Individual Talent
  - The Metaphysical Poets
- Unification of Sensibility
- Dissociation of Sensibility
- Theory of Impersonality
- Objective Correlative

# I.A. Richards

- Referred to as “critical consciousness of the modern age”
- Poet, dramatist, speculative philosopher, critic
- Beginning of New Criticism
- Exponent of Practical Criticism
- Concepts:
  - Theory of value in the arts
  - Theory of communication
  - Poetic language
    - Scientific and emotive uses of language(two uses of language)
    - Four kinds of meaning- sense, feeling, tone and intention

# Formalism

- Russian Formalism/Prague Linguistic Circle/Linguistic Criticism/Dialogic Theory
- These linguistic movements began in the 1920s (in Moscow and St Petersburg), were suppressed by the Soviets in the 1930s, moved to Czechoslovakia and were continued by members of the **Prague Linguistic Circle** (including Roman Jakobson , Jan Mukarovsky, and René Wellek).
- The Prague Linguistic Circle viewed literature as a special class of language, and rested on the assumption that there is a **fundamental opposition between literary (or poetical) language and ordinary language.**

- The linguistics of literature differs from the linguistics of practical discourse, because its laws are oriented toward producing that distinctive features that formalists call **literariness**. (Jakobson, Mukarovsky).
- **Foregrounding**- Mukarovsky- ~ of the act of expression or the utterance itself.
- Primary aim of litt – foregrounding its linguistic medium
- **Estrange or defamiliarise**- Shklovsky- litt “makes strange” the world of everyday perception and renews the reader’s lost capacity for fresh sensation- through literary devices. (Art as a device)

# Russian Formalism- leading representatives

- Boris Eichenbaum
- Victor Shklovsky
- Roman Jakobson

- Literature is held to be subject to critical analysis by the sciences of linguistics but also by a type of linguistics different from that adapted to ordinary discourse, because its laws produce the distinctive features of **literariness**.
- **Dialogism** refers to a theory, initiated by Mikhail **Bakhtin**, arguing that in a dialogic work of literature--such as in the writings of Dostoevsky--there is a "**polyphonic interplay of various characters' voices ...** where no worldview is given superiority over others; neither is that voice which may be identified with the author's necessarily the most engaging or persuasive of all those in the text"

# Key terms of Russian Formalism

- **Carnival** - "For Bakhtin, carnival reflected the 'lived life' of medieval and early modern peoples. In carnival, official authority and high culture were jostled 'from below' by elements of satire, parody, irony, mimicry, bodily humor, and grotesque display. This jostling from below served to keep society open, to liberate it from deadening..." (Bressler 276 - see *General Resources* below).
- **Heteroglossia** - "refers, first, to the way in which every instance of language use - every utterance - is embedded in a specific set of social circumstances, and second, to the way the meaning of each particular utterance is shaped and influenced by the many-layered context in which it occurs" (Sarah Willen, "Dialogism and Heteroglossia")
- **Monologism** - "having one single voice, or representing one single ideological stance or perspective, often used in opposition to the Bakhtinian dialogical. In a monological form, all the characters' voices are subordinated to the voice of the author" (Malcolm Hayward).
- **Polyphony** - "a term used by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe a dialogical text which, unlike a monological text, does not depend on the centrality of a single authoritative voice. Such a text incorporates a rich plurality and multiplicity of voices, styles, and points of view. It comprises, in Bakhtin's phrase, "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (Henderson and Brown - *Glossary of Literary Theory*).

# New Criticism

- A literary movement that started in the late 1920s and 1930s and originated in reaction to traditional criticism that new critics saw as largely concerned with matters extraneous to the text, e.g., with the biography or psychology of the author or the work's relationship to literary history.
- New Criticism proposed that a work of literary art should be regarded as autonomous, and so should not be judged by reference to considerations beyond itself.
- **Major figures** of New Criticism include I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot (pioneers)
- **Cleanth Brooks**, David Daiches, William Empson, Murray Krieger, **John Crowe Ransom**, **Allen Tate**, F. R. Leavis, **Robert Penn Warren**, **W. K. Wimsatt**, **R. P. Blackmur**, Rene Wellek, Ausin Warren, and Ivor Winters.

- Publication of John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* in 1941.
- Analysis of the literary work **as a self sufficient verbal entity**, constituted by the internal relations and independent of reference either to the state of mind of the author-psychological- or to the 'external' world.
- Explication or **close reading**- the detailed analysis of the complex interrelations and the ambiguities(multiple meanings)of the verbal and figurative components within a text.

**Close reading** - "a close and detailed analysis of the text itself to arrive at an interpretation without referring to historical, authorial, or cultural concerns" .

# Key terms of New Criticism

- **Intentional Fallacy** - equating the meaning of a poem with the author's intentions.
- **Affective Fallacy** - confusing the meaning of a text with how it makes the reader *feel*. A reader's emotional response to a text generally does not produce a reliable interpretation.
- **Heresy of Paraphrase** - assuming that an interpretation of a literary work could consist of a detailed summary or paraphrase.

# Structuralism/ Structuralist criticism

- Aristotle- emphasized on the importance of structure
- Ferdinand de Saussure- Course in General Linguistics(1915)
- Analysing a text on the basis of structural linguistics.
- Structuralism is a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perceptions and description of structures. **At its simplest, structuralism claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by all the other elements involved in that situation.**
- **Major figures** include **Claude Lévi-Strauss** , **A. J. Greimas** , **Jonathan Culler**, **Roland Barthes** , **Ferdinand de Saussure** , **Roman Jakobson** , **Vladimir Propp**, and **Terence Hawkes**.

# Saussure

- Key concepts:
  - Sign- signified/ signifier
  - Langue/parole (collective language system and individual use of that system)
  - Synchronic/ diachronic (contemporary state/historic dimension)
  - Speech/ writing
- Meaning is arbitrary
- Meaning is relational, language constitutes our world.
- Literary work becomes texts –play of component elements according to codes.

# Roland Barthes

- Author is dead- *Death of an Author*
- Readerly text(specific meanings/ close meanings)
- Writerly texts( galaxy of signifiers- encourages reader to be producer of meanings)

- **Binary Opposition** - "pairs of mutually-exclusive signifiers in a paradigm set representing categories which are logically opposed and which together define a complete universe of discourse (relevant ontological domain), e.g. alive/not-alive. In such oppositions each term necessarily implies its opposite and there is no middle term"
- **Signifier/ signified**: According to Saussure, "words are not symbols which correspond to referents, but rather are 'signs' which are made up of two parts (like two sides of a sheet of paper): a mark, either written or spoken, called a 'signifier,' and a concept (what is 'thought' when the mark is made), called a 'signified'"

- A literary “work” becomes a “text”; that is a mode of writing constituted by a play of component elements- according to specifically literary conventions and codes.

# Post Structuralism

- is a reaction to structuralism and works against seeing language as a stable, closed system.
- In addition to **Jacques Derrida**, key poststructuralist and deconstructive figures include **Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes , Jean Baudrillard, Helene Cixous, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Jacques Lacan** and Barbara Johnson.

- 1970s
- 1966- Derrida's paper "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" delivered at Johns Hopkins University.
- Structuralism presupposes a "centre" – and that is questioned by PS.
- Derrida and others regard this incoherent unrealizable notion of an ever-active yet always absent centre (logo centric, absolute, essence)- and the move was in the line of antifoundationalism as we see in philosophy
- The workings of language inescapably undermine meanings in the very process of making such meanings possible
- Decentering of the subject- deleting the structural linguistic "centre"

- **Aporia** - a moment of undecidability; the inherent contradictions found in any text. Derrida, for example, cites the inherent contradictions at work in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's use of the words *culture* and *nature* by demonstrating that Rousseau's sense of the self's innocence (in nature) is already corrupted by the concept of culture (and existence) and vice-versa.
- **Différance** - a combination of the meanings in the word *différance*. The concept means 1) *différer* or to differ, 2) *différance* which means to delay or postpone (defer), and 3) the idea of difference itself. To oversimplify, words are always at a distance from what they signify and, to make matters worse, must be described by using other words.

## **Structuralism**

- Origins in linguistics( belief in objective knowledge)
- Tends towards abstractions and generalisations
- Reality constructed through language

## **Poststructuralism**

- Origins in Philosophy( skepticism about objectivity)
- Tends to be emotive, euphoric
- Construction of reality a continual yet postponed process

- The structuralist seeks

- Parallels/Echoes
- Balances

- Reflections/Repetitions
- Symmetry
- Contrasts
- Patterns
- Effect: To show textual unity and  
Coherence

- The post- structuralist seeks

- Contradictions/paradoxes
- Shifts/Breaks in: Tone  
Viewpoint  
Time  
Person  
attitude

- Conflicts
- Absences/Omissions
- Linguistic quirks
- Aporia
- Effect: To show textual disunity

## MODERNISM

- Fragmentation is tragic
- Laments on the loss of unity
- Art can provide unity

## POST MODERNISM

- Celebrates fragmentation
- Unity, coherence is not possible

- Baudrillard's Simulacrum- we have lost capacity to discriminate between real and artificial
- Torn between two wars

# Post Colonial Criticism

- Literally, postcolonialism refers to the period following the decline of colonialism, e.g., the end or lessening of domination by European empires. Although the term *postcolonialism* generally refers to the period after colonialism, the distinction is not always made. In its use as a **critical approach, postcolonialism refers to** "a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture (literature, politics, history, and so forth) of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world"
- Among the many challenges facing postcolonial writers are the attempt both to resurrect their culture and to combat preconceptions about their culture.
- Edward Said, for example, uses the word Orientalism to describe the discourse about the East constructed by the West.
- **Major figures** include Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie, Jamaica Kincaid, and Buchi Emecheta.

- **Eurocentrism** - "the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and values at the expense of those of other cultures. It is an instance of ethnocentrism, perhaps especially relevant because of its alignment with current and past real power structures in the world"
- **Hybridity** - "an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures ("integration" may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new).
- **Adopt, Adapt, Adept** in postcolonial writings

- Orientalism- the European cultural tradition of defining and identifying the East as “Other” and inferior to the West.
  - The Orient becomes the projection of those aspects of the west which the westerners do not wish to acknowledge(cruelty, decadence, sensuality, laziness).
  - The East is seen as a fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and seductive
  - East is homogenous- anonymous mass
- Nation/Nationalism
- Diaspora
- Home/Borders
- Language is permanently tainted

# Reader Response Theory

- Against the traditional approach to text as a structure of meaning achieved prior to reading.
- At its most basic level, reader response criticism considers readers' reactions to literature as vital to interpreting the meaning of the text. However, reader-response criticism can take a number of different approaches.
- reader-response theorists share two beliefs: 1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and 2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature"
- Reception theory
- Phenomenology
- Hermeneutics

- For **Stanley Fish** -the reader's ability to understand a text is also subject a reader's particular "interpretive community." To simplify, a reader brings certain assumptions to a text based on the interpretive strategies he/she has learned in a particular interpretive community.
- For Fish, the interpretive community serves somewhat to "police" readings and thus prohibit outlandish interpretations.
- In contrast **Wolfgang Iser** argued that the reading process is always subjective. In *The Implied Reader*, Iser sees reading as a dialectical process between the reader and text.
- For **Hans-Robert Jauss**, however (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, and *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*), a reader's aesthetic experience is always bound by time and historical determinants.

- ***Phenomenology***

Phenomenology is a philosophical method, first developed by **Edmund Husserl**, that proposed "phenomenological reduction" so that everything not "immanent" to consciousness must be excluded; all realities must be treated as pure "phenomena" and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin. Husserl viewed consciousness always as intentional and that the act of consciousness, the thinking subject and the object it "intends," are inseparable. Art is not a means of securing pleasure, but a revelation of being. The work is the phenomenon by which we come to know the world

- ***Hermeneutics***

Hermeneutics sees interpretation as a circular process whereby valid interpretation can be achieved by a sustained, mutually qualifying interplay between our progressive sense of the whole and our retrospective understanding of its component parts. Two dominant theories that emerged from Wilhelm **Dilthey**'s original premise were that of E. D. Hirsch who, in accord with Dilthey, felt a valid interpretation was possible by uncovering the work's authorial intent (though informed by historical and cultural determinants), and in contrast, that of **Martin Heidegger** who argued that a reader must experience the "inner life" of a text in order to understand it at all. The reader's "being-in-the-world" or *dasein* is fraught with difficulties since both the reader and the text exist in a temporal and fluid state. For Heidegger or Hans Georg **Gadamer**, then, a valid interpretation may become irrecoverable and will always be relative.

# Major critics

- Stanley Fish
- Norman Holland
- Louise Rosenblatt
- Wolfgang Iser - *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, 1974
- Hans Rober Jauss

# New Historicism

- 1980's- mainly through the works of **Stephen Greenblatt**.
- Reaction against new criticism, structuralism, deconstruction
- Literature seen as an expression of the power structures of the surrounding society
- Thus lit. work should be considered a product of the historical and cultural conditions of its productions and interpretations, rather than as an isolated creation of genius.
- NHs aim simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature.
- Parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts.

# Cultural Materialism

- Term used by Raymond Williams
- Marxist orientation of NH
- Analysis of any Historical material (including Litt), within a political framework
- 4 characteristics-
  - historical context
  - Theoretical method
  - Political commitment
  - Textual analysis
- Focus on marginalised- than mere class conflicts.

# Marxist criticism

- Based on the theories of Karl Marx (and so influenced by philosopher Hegel), this school concerns itself with **class differences, economic and otherwise**, as well as the **implications and complications of the capitalist system**: "Marxism attempts to reveal the ways in which our socioeconomic system is the ultimate source of our experience"

- The Marxist school follows a process of thinking called the material dialectic. This belief system maintains that "...what drives historical change are the material realities of the economic base of society, rather than the ideological superstructure of politics, law, philosophy, religion, and art that is built upon that economic base"

- Marxist Criticism is the belief that literature reflects this class struggle and materialism.
- It looks at how literature functions in relation to other aspects of the superstructure, particularly other articulations of ideology.

The Frankfurt School is associated with Marxist criticism

- Like feminist critics, it investigates how literature can work as a force for social change, or as a reaffirmation of existing conditions. • Like New Historicism, it examines how history influences literature; the difference is that Marxism focuses on the lower classes.

# Major writers

- Karl Marx - (with Friedrich Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848; *Das Kapital*, 1867
- Georg Lukacs
- Walter Benjamin
- Theodor W. Adorno
- Louis Althusser
- Terry Eagleton
- Frederic Jameson
- **Jürgen** Habermas
- Raymond Williams
- Louis Althusser
- Walter Benjamin
- Antonio Gramsci
- Gilles Deleuze

# Feminist Criticism

- Feminist criticism is concerned with "**...the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women**".
- This school of theory looks at **how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal** (male dominated)
- and "**...this critique strives to expose the explicit and implicit misogyny** in male writing about women"
- Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious **forms of marginalization** such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon

- To speak of "Feminism" as a theory is already a reduction. However, in terms of its theory (rather than as its reality as a historical movement in effect for some centuries) feminism might be categorized into three general groups:
  - theories having an essentialist focus (including psychoanalytic and French feminism);
  - theories aimed at defining or establishing a feminist literary canon or theories seeking to re-interpret and re-vision literature (and culture and history and so forth) from a less patriarchal slant (including gynocriticism, liberal feminism); and
  - theories focusing on sexual difference and sexual politics (including gender studies, lesbian studies, cultural feminism, radical feminism, and socialist/materialist feminism).

- Feminist criticism has, in many ways, followed what some theorists call the three waves of feminism:
- **First Wave Feminism** - late 1700s-early 1900's: writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792) highlight the inequalities between the sexes. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Victoria Woodhull contribute to the women's suffrage movement, which leads to National Universal Suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment
- **Second Wave Feminism** - early 1960s-late 1970s: building on more equal working conditions necessary in America during World War II, movements such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1966, cohere feminist political activism. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir (*Le deuxième sexe*, 1972) and Elaine Showalter established the groundwork for the dissemination of feminist theories dove-tailed with the American Civil Rights movement
- **Third Wave Feminism** - early 1990s-present: resisting the perceived essentialist (over generalized, over simplified) ideologies and a white, heterosexual, middle class focus of second wave feminism, third wave feminism borrows from post-structural and contemporary gender and race theories (see below) to expand on marginalized populations' experiences. Writers like Alice Walker work to "...reconcile it [feminism] with the concerns of the black community...[and] the survival and wholeness of her people, men and women both, and for the promotion of dialog and community as well as for the valorization of women and of all the varieties of work women perform"

- Kate Millet- “the essence of politics is power” and pervasive concept of power in our society is male dominance
- Elaine Showalter’s Feminist Identifications
  - **Biological Model**- if the text somehow mirrors the body reducing women merely to bodies
  - **Linguistics Model**- language of sexism
  - **Psychoanalytic Model** identifies gender difference as the basis of the psyche, focusing on the relation of gender to the artistic process
  - **Cultural Model** places feminist concerns in social contexts, acknowledging class, racial, national, and historical differences and determinants among women, but offering a collective experience that unites women over time and space – a binding force.

- **Gynocentrism** - "a term coined by the feminist scholar-critic **Elaine Showalter** to define the process of constructing "a female framework for analysis of women's literature [in order] to develop new models [of interpretation] based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt to male models and theories"

# Major critics

- Mary Wollstonecraft - *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792
- Simone de Beauvoir - *The Second Sex*
- Julia Kristeva
- Elaine Showalter
- Kate Millet
- Rebecca West
- Adrienne Rich
- Virginia Woolf
- Betty Friedan

# Myth Criticism/ Archetypal Criticism

- A form of criticism based largely on the works of **C. G. Jung** and **Joseph Campbell** (and myth itself).
- Some of the school's **major figures** include Robert Graves, Francis Fergusson, Philip Wheelwright, Leslie Fiedler, **Northrop Frye**, Maud Bodkin, and G. Wilson Knight.
- These critics view the genres and individual **plot patterns of literature, including highly sophisticated and realistic works, as recurrences of certain archetypes and essential mythic formulae.**
- Archetypes, according to **Jung**, are "primordial images"; the "psychic residue" of repeated types of experience in the lives of very ancient ancestors which are inherited in the "collective unconscious" of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in the works of literature (Abrams, p. 10, 112).
- Some common examples of archetypes include water, sun, moon, colors, circles, the Great Mother, Wise Old Man, etc. In terms of archetypal criticism, the color *white* might be associated with innocence or could signify death or the supernatural

- **Anima** - feminine aspect - the inner feminine part of the male personality or a man's image of a woman.
- **Animus** - male aspect - an inner masculine part of the female personality or a woman's image of a man.
- **Archetype** - (from Makaryk - see *General Resources* below) - "a typical or recurring image, character, narrative design, theme, or other literary phenomenon that has been in literature from the beginning and regularly reappears" .  
**Note - Frye sees archetypes as recurring patterns in literature; in contrast, Jung views archetypes as primal, ancient images/experience that we have inherited.**
- **Collective Unconscious** - "a set of primal memories common to the human race, existing below each person's conscious mind" (Jung)
- **Persona** - the image we present to the world
- **Shadow** - darker, sometimes hidden (deliberately or unconsciously), elements of a person's psyche

# Psychoanalytical Criticism

- The application of specific psychological principles (particularly those of **Sigmund Freud** and **Jacques Lacan** ) to the study of literature.
- Psychoanalytic criticism may focus on the writer's psyche, the study of the creative process, the study of psychological types and principles present within works of literature, or the effects of literature upon its readers (Wellek and Warren, p. 81).
- In addition to Freud and Lacan, **major figures** include Shoshona Felman, Jane Gallop, Norman Holland, George Klein, Elizabeth Wright, Frederick Hoffman, and, Simon Lesser.

## Freud's model of the psyche:

- **Id** - completely unconscious part of the psyche that serves as a storehouse of our desires, wishes, and fears. The id houses the libido, the source of psychosexual energy.
- **Ego** - mostly to partially (<--a point of debate) conscious part of the psyche that processes experiences and operates as a referee or mediator between the id and superego.
- **Superego** - often thought of as one's "conscience"; the superego operates "like an internal censor [encouraging] moral judgments in light of social pressures" (123, Bressler - see *General Resources* below).

## Lacan's model of the psyche:

- **Imaginary** - a preverbal/verbal stage in which a child (around 6-18 months of age) begins to develop a sense of separateness from her mother as well as other people and objects; however, the child's sense of sense is still incomplete.
- **Symbolic** - the stage marking a child's entrance into language (the ability to understand and generate symbols); in contrast to the imaginary stage, largely focused on the mother, the symbolic stage shifts attention to the father who, in Lacanian theory, represents cultural norms, laws, language, and power (the symbol of power is the **phallus**--an arguably "gender-neutral" term).
- **Real** - an unattainable stage representing all that a person is not and does not have. Both Lacan and his critics argue whether the real order represents the period before the imaginary order when a child is completely fulfilled--without need or lack, or if the real order follows the symbolic order and represents our "perennial lack" (because we cannot return to the state of wholeness that existed before language).